

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 125174
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

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DRAFTED BY:EUR/NE:DJDONCHI

APPROVED BY:EUR/NE:RLFUNSETH

S/S-O:MKENNEDY

-----130194 171520Z /53

R 170248Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 6969

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T STATE 125174

EXDIS MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE ALSO FOR POLADS

FOLLOWING REPEAT REYKJAVIK 597 SENT ACTION SECSTATE MAY 03.
QUOTE S E C R E T REYKJAVIK 0597

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: MARR, IC

SUBJECT: AIR TERMINAL DECISION

REF: STATE 112290

1. I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON AT NOON
TODAY, MAY 3, AND REVIEWED CONTENTS OF REFTEL WITH HIM.
PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR US DECISION
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AND AGREED THAT DETAILS CONCERNING CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE
TWO GOVERNMENTS TO GHE PROJECT COULD BE WORKED OUT AT A
LATER DATE THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTER. PRIME MINISTER
ADDED THAT THE GOI WAS INTERESTED IN POSSIBLY STARTING
CONSTRUCTION IN LATE 1979 OR EARLY 1980 BUT WOULD AWAIT
OUTCOME OF FURTHER DISCUSSIONS BEFORE DETERMINING HOW MUCH
COULD BE DONE PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1980 US BUDGET CYCLE. PRIME

MINISTER THEN NOTED POSITIVE IMPACT US DECISION WOULD HAVE ON POPULAR SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED PRESENCE OF NATO BASE IN ICELAND. RE POSSIBLE PRESS STATEMENT BY GOI, PRIME MINISTER STATED HE WISHED TO REFLECT ON THIS AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSY CONCERNING POINTS I INDICATED WE WOULD WISH SUGGEST IN SUCH EVENT. I TOLD HIM THAT DCM CHRISTENSEN, WHO ACCOMPANIED ME TO MEETING, WAS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THIS ASPECT OF MATTER AND WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR DISCUSSIONS ON IT DURING MY ABSENCE FROM POST.

2. PRIME MINISTER THEN ASKED WHETHER "ANYONE ELSE" KNEW OF USG DECISION. I INDICATED NO ONE ELSE IN GOI HAD BEEN INFORMED OF DECISION BUT THAT COMICEDEFOR WAS AWARE OF IT AND OF TIGHT CONTROL ON DISSEMINATION. I THEN ASKED WHETHER PRIME MINISTER THOUGHT I SHOULD INFORM FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON OF DECISION. PRIME MINISTER READILY AGREED, AND APPOINTMENT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS PROMPTLY ARRANGED FOR THIS AFTERNOON.

3. I SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON AT 3:30 P.M. AT THE ALTHING BUILDING. HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED WORD OF THE US DECISION BUT WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR IT DIRECTLY FROM ME. I WENT OVER SAME POINTS I HAD MADE TO PRIME MINISTER. AGUSTSSON MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION THAT
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FOLLOWED MY PRESENTATION HOW PLEASED HE WAS WITH DECISION. HE SAID THAT HE FORESAW NO REAL PROBLEM FOR ICELAND IF US FUNDS WERE NOT AVAILABLE BEFORE OCTOBER 1980 SINCE THE GOI WILL NEED SOME TIME TO REFINE ITS PLANS AND START PREPARING BLUE PRINTS AND DRAWINGS. FUNDING FOR THESE INITIAL STEPS WILL BE SOUGHT SOON FROM THE ALTHING, AFTER WHICH FOLLOW-UP BILATERAL TALKS COULD BE INITIATED EITHER IN REYKJAVIK OR WASHINGTON. HE SAW NO NEED FOR A PRESS RELEASE UNTIL ADDITIONAL DETAILS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT AND HE PROMISED THAT BEFORE ANY RELEASE WERE ISSUED, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD CONSULT WITH THE EMBASSY TO ASSURE THAT IT REFLECTED OUR POINTS OF VIEW.

4. AGUSTSSON CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THE IMPORTANT THING FOR THE MOMENT FOR THE GOI AND FOR HIM PERSONALLY WAS THAT THE USG HAS BEEN ABLE TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THIS IMPORTANT PRIORITY REQUEST FROM ICELAND.
BLAKE
UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, AIRPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE125174
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/NE:DJDONCHI
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780208-0015
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780549/aaaaboxp.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8de7b39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 112290
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2661577
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AIR TERMINAL DECISION
TAGS: MARR, ECRE, IC, US
To: USNATO DOD MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8de7b39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014